

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School



# CONTINUUM

December 2005

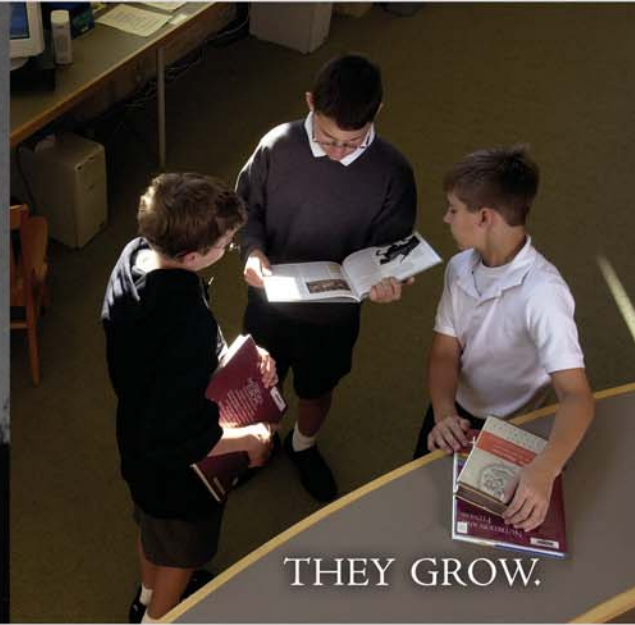
Will Murchison helped lead the Hawks to their first undefeated season and the SPC-II Championship.

## Finding a way

*How record-breaking tailback Will Murchison '06 learned to reconcile the artist and the football player within.*



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# Reflecting on our many blessings

*Successes from 50 years ago and from just last month give us pause*

This issue of *The Continuum* offers news of many successes. As always, the Class Notes section includes the “successes” of alumni who introduce their newborns to the community and who announce job promotions. The News and Sports sections bring you stories of student, faculty, and alumni successes. But all of these represent only a small fraction of the successes of the Cistercian Community at large. Many we don’t hear about. Others we haven’t the space to publish. But, we are grateful for every blessing the community receives, published or not.



## Letter from the Headmaster

*Fr. Peter Verhalen '73*

In our first feature, David Stewart '74 tells the fascinating story of how the Cistercian fathers succeeded in finding a home in America. These courageous priests thought nothing of escaping Hungary, leaving behind, as they used to say, everything but their accents. They were determined to preserve their traditions in a strange land, with a very different language and cul-

ture. While they probably did not think of themselves as a great success story in 1955, we know today, 50 years later, that they indeed established a wellspring of successes: the Cistercian Abbey and School.

In his second story, David captures a story of one senior’s journey through Upper School; it represents the process every student undergoes as he explores his own talents and feelings. This year, Will Murchison '06 ran his way into Cistercian football history while he added to his award-winning art portfolio. His leadership qualities were forged through facing the challenges of adolescence — learning who he was so he could put himself at the service of the class, the team, and the community. The story also portrays the efforts of the Cistercian faculty, staff, and parents to support and guide Will. Through such efforts we hope to help every student pursue his interests and talents while always thinking first of the other.

I hope the stories in this issue encourage you to reflect on the many blessings Cistercian has enjoyed over the last 50 years. This Christmas let us all — students, faculty, monks, alumni, and parents — pray that we might bring the hope and blessing that is Christ into our own communities.

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Hungarian Cistercians came to America after WW II to preserve their way of life. Finding a home in the New World wouldn’t be easy.

## Finding a way 12

In Upper School, Will Murchison '06 learned about the artist in the football player, or vice versa.



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*Cover photography: Jim Reisch*

Cistercian Preparatory School was founded with the aim of preparing talented boys for the colleges of their choice by challenging their minds with excellent academic programs, molding their character through the values of Catholic education, and offering them guidance with both understanding and discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational practices, admissions, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Silent Auction

# Homecoming event raises nearly \$46,000

The second annual Homecoming Silent Auction was a great success, raising almost \$46,000 for Cistercian scholarships.

That represents a significant jump from last year's inaugural event, which raised \$35,000 for the Hillary and Henderson Scholarship Funds.

With an increased number of silent auction donors, generous underwriters and willing volunteers, Robin Springer and Jennifer Rotter (event organizers) were overwhelmed with generosity.

Indeed, our list of sponsors grew to such a length that it became impractical to include them all in this magazine story.

This partnership between the Alumni Association and Booster Club has proven to be a good one, bringing members of the Cistercian community out for an evening of fun.

## Catholic Foundation Greenfield, Pruitt win "Work of Heart" awards

Cistercian teachers Jackie Greenfield (English) and Dr. Tom Pruitt (English) were among a host of "Work of Heart" recipients for September and October.

This brand new fund at The Catholic Foundation, established by a family dedicated to Catholic education, recognizes and rewards teachers, administrators, and staff of the Catholic lower, middle, and high schools in the Diocese of Dallas.

The benefactors are looking for the "unsung heroes," those who deserve recognition for outstanding service and dedication. Specifically, they seek to reward tenure, enthusiasm, kindness, exemplary Christian



Photo by Jim Reisch

**NEW FACULTY & STAFF**  
(left to right) Andrew Gregg '01, Jennifer Kirlin, Michael Humphries, Marc Neri, and Tatevik Ambartsoumian. Not pictured are Jeff Breeding, Pat Heard, and Michael McGuire.

behavior, mentoring, and extraordinary effort for students or the community.

Up to twenty \$500 awards will be presented each month of the 2005-06 school year. In addition, four grand awards of \$5,000 will be given each semester.

Nominations should be submitted to The Catholic Foundation by email (info@catholicfoundation.com) with the subject line "Work of Heart Award."

Nominations should be one page in length, identify the nominee, clearly stating why the individual is being nominated. The name, phone number and relationship of the person making the nomination must also be included.

Anyone (other than a relative) may submit a nomination.

Cistercian applauds this fine effort to support our very best teachers.

## Armenia to Richardson New faculty and staff bring varied backgrounds

Cistercian's newest teachers come from near and far.

"I fell in love with Cistercian the first day I came for an interview," gushed Tatevik Ambartsoumian. The native of Armenia majored in applied mathematics at the Obninsk Institute for Nuclear Power Engineering in Russia and earned her master's in mathematics from Texas A&M.

Ambartsoumian teaches math (Forms II and V).

"My impression was that all

Cistercian students are absolutely brilliant," said Michael Humphries, who holds B.A. degrees in Philosophy and Math from UD.

"Instead I have found classrooms filled with boys full of zeal," suggested the 22-year-old Arkansas native. "The boys are excited and happy; they're enthused to be here."

Humphries teaches math (Forms I and III).

Marc Neri comes to Cistercian from the University of Durham (B.S. in Physics) in the United Kingdom by way of UD, where he is working on his master's degree in Humanities. He teaches Earth Science (Form I), coaches soccer, and serves as an assistant in the development office.

"I am very impressed with how highly motivated the faculty is at Cistercian," he said.

One of the new faces, Jennifer Kirlin, has taken over for the retired Mary Steinhauer as administrative assistant to the headmaster. Kirlin earned her B.A. in Business from Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado in 1991.

"This new career is refreshing," said Kirlin who worked as a probations officer for 10 years.

Michael McGuire grew up in Hoboken, NJ, and earned his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from South Alabama before coming to UT Southwestern Medical Center 20 years ago. He serves as assistant professor in the Division for Translational Research, Department of Internal Medicine.

McGuire and wife Marta have three children, including Tim '95 and Greg '09.

"The seniors have a great class spirit," he said. "They celebrate each other's achievements in and out of the classroom."

Pat Heard, who teaches

## noteworthy

■ **MORONEY DATE MOVES, NOMINATIONS WELCOME:** This year's Jim and Lynn Moroney Award Dinner will take place at the Tower Club on Friday, February 24, 2006. The Alumni Office is now accepting nominations for the annual award, which is the highest honor bestowed on a Cistercian alumnus. To nominate an alumnus for the 2006 award, please send a letter of support and nomination to the Alumni Office via email (jrotter@cistercian.org).

■ **Math counts too:** Cistercian entered four math teams into the Texas A&M High School Power Contest, a power contest being a long series of interconnected proofs that culminate in some significant mathematical results. From among the top schools in Texas, Cistercian was the only school to place two Power Teams into the top ten. The junior team of Captain **Michael Montoya '07**, **Matt Escoto '07**, **Derek Reiman '07**, **Joseph Simmons '07**, **Alex Tong '07**, and **Stephen Wang '07** placed 6th in the state. The senior team of Captain **Paul Hedrick '06**, **Bobby Crews '06**, **James Hansell '06**, **Kurt Klinke '06**, **Chris McGowan '06**, and **Greg Wallingford '06** placed 10th in the state. Go Hawks!

English Lab (Form III), also teaches at SMU Law School. She earned her law degree from the University of Texas School of Law.

“As a parent and as a teacher,” said Heard, mother of Zach Heard ’05 and Connor Heard ’08, “I have seen first hand the mysterious quality of an all-boy education. Cistercian is confident enough in itself to allow the boys to take risks and find their way.”

Jeff Breeding, who has a B.A. in Kinesiology and a minor in science from the University of Texas at Arlington, is familiar to many boys in the Upper School from his coaching stint at Cistercian two years ago. The Dallas native and Richardson High School graduate who played college baseball teaches Health

(Form III), PE (Forms I and II) and serves as the head coach for JV football.

“I believe that Cistercian is special,” Breeding said, “because of how the faculty and staff work together to benefit the students.”

Andrew Gregg ’01, graduated from the University of the South just this last May, with a double major in Latin and Mediaeval Studies, along with a minor in Ancient Greek. Gregg teaches Latin (Form III).

“I am frequently surprised, or awed, by the ‘genius’ [here],” he said.

“It’s a kind of group project we’re all working on,” he added, “defining the Cistercian genius, or ‘Cistercian-ness,’ and what it means to be a great Cistercian student, teacher, or friend, in as many ways as possible.”

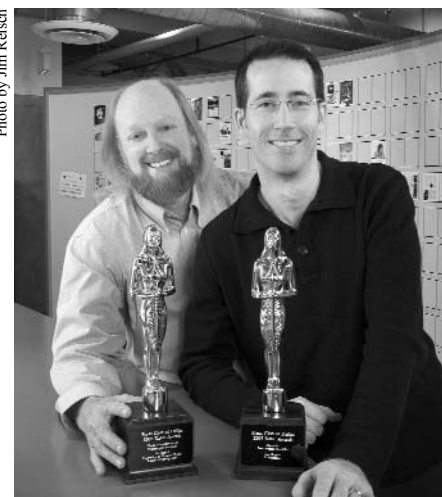
## Katie Awards Reisch and Rogers win Press Club honors

While Cistercian may not be a bastion of journalism education, a couple of members of the community earned recognition at the 47th Annual Katie Awards, presented by the Press Club of Dallas in November.

**Tim Rogers ’88** won a Katie for Best Writing Portfolio in the magazine category for his work in *D Magazine*, where he is executive editor. This is Rogers’ third Katie.

Jim Reisch, commercial photographer, Cistercian teacher, and parent won a Katie in the Visual Communications category for Best Photography Portfolio for

Photo by Jim Reisch



**KATIE WINNERS Jim Reisch and Tim Rogers ’88 with their awards.**

his work in the UTD School of Management magazine.

*The Dallas Morning News*, under the steady hand of **Jim Moroney ’74**, won seven Katies.

## Reports from Katrina country

### Alumni in New Orleans and Mississippi swap stories

When **Kyle Resh ’99** woke up to the news that Katrina had morphed into a Category 5, he had only two hours to get out of town.

“I grabbed clothes to last a few days,” he said. He and his girlfriend, plus his best buddy and roommate hit the road before noon on Sunday.

They would not return for two months. It was much the same story for **Rod**

**Walter ’83** whose house in New Orleans suffered significant damage. He and his family just recently moved back.

**Bryant Konermann ’96**, who owns Jimmy’s Music Club not far from Tulane University, also came back after a couple of months away.

“If it wasn’t flooded, it was looted,” he reported.

But federal troops and local cops are doing their best.

“I recently called in a robbery and 15 troops, 20 cops, and two search dogs showed up.”

Fifty percent of the city remains without power and land lines are still down.

“But ‘Help Wanted’ signs are everywhere,” he said, “If you can work a hammer, you get a job.”

Both Resh and Konermann have adopted a wait-and-see attitude about the future of the

Crescent City.

“We were lucky,” **Mike Novinski ’90** reported from Columbia, Mississippi

(about 90 miles north of the Gulf). “No trees close to the house, and the wind went the other way on us.”

Just north of Pascagoula, which is about 15 miles from the Gulf, **Pat Haggerty ’85** knew that “when a Category 4 Hurricane hits, you know it’s all toast.”

Actually, Haggerty’s house suffered no structural damage, but “some of the roof was taken down to plywood. We did lose a barn though.”

His former beach house (he was renting it out at the time) was not so lucky.

“Everything under five feet is see-through, no brick, no doors, no windows,” he explained.

“Yea, I had one sleepless night just after it came in,” Haggerty admitted.

“On the day after the storm, my wife, who’d been staying safe with family while I was teaching in New Jersey, packed up the Ford F-350 with all the diesel and water she could carry, along with the greyhound, my 12-year-old foster daughter, and her .45 and drove back into the black hole that was southern Mississippi.

“It was two days before I heard from her again.

“Talk about sleepless nights.”

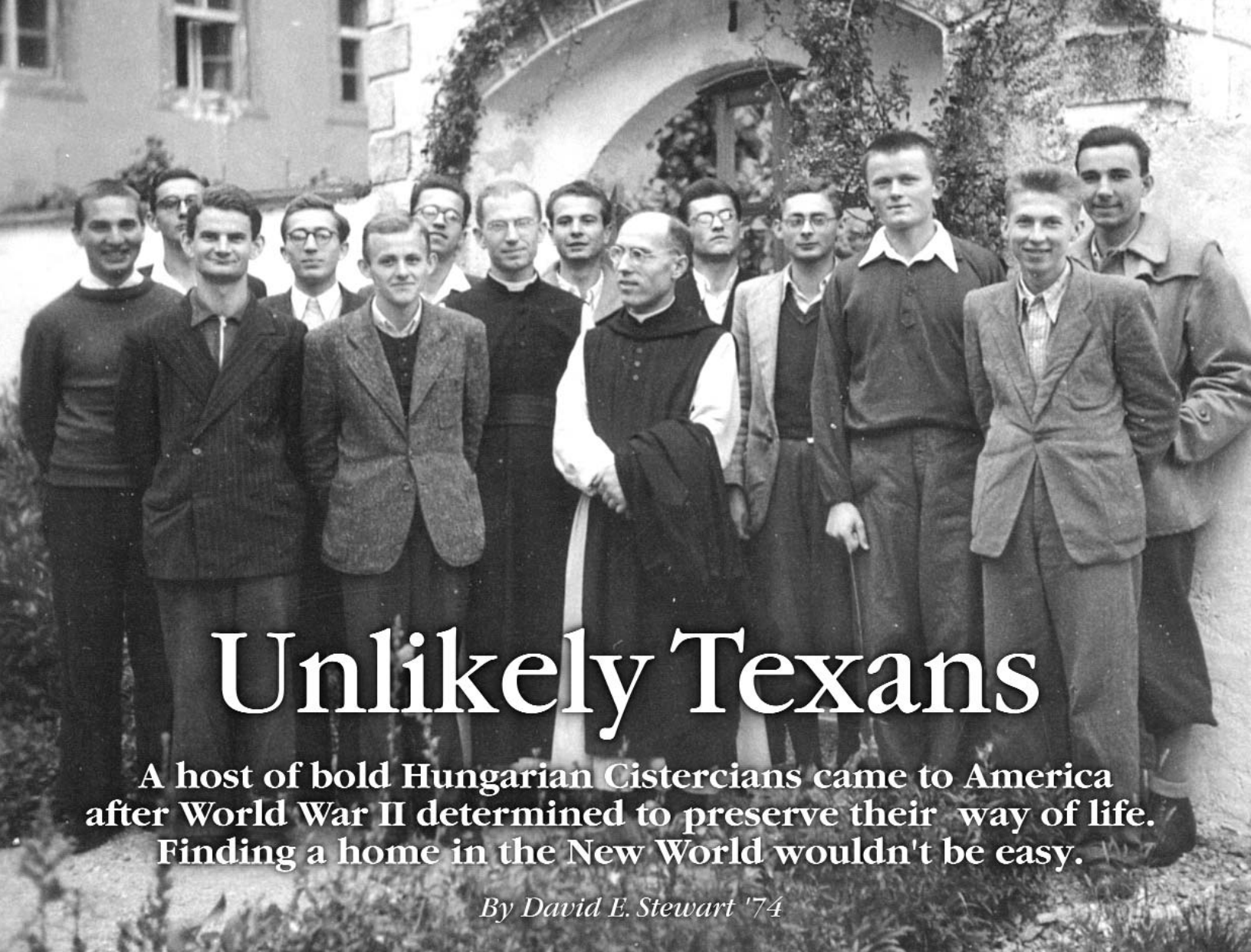
“You think you’d miss the house, or the car, or the barn?”

“Cry to someone else, I feel lucky.”



Photo by Patrick Haggerty

**KATRINA’S WRATH Pat Haggerty ’86 laughs about damage to his property (above) but feels lucky his loved ones escaped harm.**



# Unlikely Texans

A host of bold Hungarian Cistercians came to America after World War II determined to preserve their way of life. Finding a home in the New World wouldn't be easy.

By David E. Stewart '74

*Editor's note: In the spring of 1955, seven Cistercian Fathers moved into a residence on Swiss Avenue. Two years later, construction began on the first wing of the current monastery, which was consecrated in 1958. The following story, one of a number of historical perspectives we'll bring you over the next few years, is dedicated to the pioneers whose efforts 50 years ago made possible the Cistercian Abbey and Prep School we know today.*

“GOOD LORD,” SHIVERED FR. BENEDICT Monostori as he lifted his clothes onto the bank and climbed naked from a five-foot-deep irrigation canal. Along with 19 Cistercian student monks and another Cistercian priest, he had escaped only minutes before across the 50-yard-wide Hungarian border, replete with guard towers, barbed wire, and minefields.

Now they stood shaking silently as they dried themselves, trying to steel themselves against the cold and the uncertainty that lay ahead. A couple of hours remained before dawn. For a moment, Fr Benedict's gaze was drawn back towards Hungary.

“Never again in our lives will we return to our homeland,” he thought. Then he turned back towards Austria. There wasn't time for reminiscing.

Peering into the chilly darkness, Fr. Benedict slowly shook his head, “I don't even know where we are going.”

Only 13 of the 21 would make it to Vienna and eventually to Stams and Rome. Eight were arrested on a bus en route to Vienna, returned to Hungary, and imprisoned (including Fr. Pascal Kis-Horvath).

Nearly eight weeks later, on October 29, Abbot Wendelin Endrédy, the abbot of Zirc, was arrested and imprisoned. The Soviets were slamming the door on the Cistercian Order in Hungary. No more Cistercians would manage to escape the country again until the Revolution of October 1956.

But prior to his arrest, Abbot Wendelin had helped dozens of Cistercians from the Abbey of Zirc (the mother abbey of all Hungarian Cistercians, pronounced ZEERTS) escape. They would keep the traditions of the Abbey living and breathing in America.

The idea of going to America had been proposed by a 29-year-old priest living in Eger, Hungary in the summer of 1945. A brilliant man of many passions, Fr. Louis J. Lekai was repulsed by the idea of a Soviet occupation. While many expected the Soviets to abandon

**ARRIVING SAFELY IN STAMS** In September 1950, Fr. Benedict Monostori and 12 student monks arrived at the Cistercian Abbey of Stams, in Tirol, Austria shortly after their escape from Hungary. Five ended up in Dallas, Br. Daniel Csanyi (far left), Br. Melchior Chladek, Fr. Benedict, Br. Aloysius Kimencz, (the sixth, seventh and eighth from the left), and Br. David Balas (second from the right). The second priest in the photo is thier host, the prior of Stams.

Hungary by 1947, Fr. Louis believed they had more sinister plans.

"We must look forward," he wrote to friend and former Cistercian classmate Fr. Anselm Nagy on July 19, 1945, "and do our best with what is left of our lives. We must work and begin to make plans. For my part, I have formed a plan which I have already communicated to our abbot."

Establishing a foundation in America appeared to him to be the only certain way to preserve their way of life.

"I do not want to exaggerate," he concluded his letter to Fr. Anselm, "but one may say that the survival of our community depends on our readiness to work with dedication and diligence for what we set out as our goal."

That plan – to build a school and a monastery in the New World – was approved by Abbot Wendelin in a surprisingly swift fashion. (The Abbey of Zirc had developed a distinctly Hungarian identity, one that set it apart from the rest of the Cistercian Order and made it seem an unlikely candidate for a move to the New World.)

This decisive and unprecedented move would preserve the legacy of Zirc, even while the doors of the Abbey itself remained closed to religious activity for 45 years.

Between 1946 and 1968, a total of 42 Cistercians from the Abbey of Zirc would land safely in the US (although 10 eventually left the Order).

The first of those priests from Zirc, the pioneers who arrived in America between 1946 and 1954, faced a complex set of problems before they could establish the monastery they had envisioned.

FR. LOUIS, WHO WOULD awe history students at the University of Dallas years later, had been pushing for an American foundation since 1945. He was still pushing in the summer of 1953.

Fr. Louis and Fr. Anselm embarked together on several exploratory expeditions to find a permanent home. Thier first, in August 1949, took them to 19 western and southwestern dioceses during a three-week period.

Fr. Louis served as the pitch man, touting the Cistercians' skills with gusto, while Fr. Anselm listened politely, carefully took notes, and analyzed the prospects.

But diocesan officials who met with Fr. Louis and Fr. Anselm could be forgiven if they had some reservations about these Cistercians from Hungary.

Heavy accents, mispronounced words, and still-developing grammar shrouded the meaning of their sentences.

While Fr. Louis attempted to extol their Hungarian teaching experience and advanced degrees, his listeners must have wondered how American secondary school students could learn anything from these Hungarians if they could not understand them.

(Even decades later, parents of students at Cistercian Prep School would have a devil of a time deciphering the homilies delivered by Fr. Anselm at Opening and Closing Ceremonies.)

"The mastering of the new language proved to be far more difficult and required a far longer time than had been anticipated," Fr. Louis acknowledged in a 1968 article published in *The Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*.

That first trip in 1949, however, generated offers from both San Diego and Dallas. Fr. Louis spent four months in San Diego before concluding that the venture — to create a prep school in conjunction with the planned University of San Diego — posed too many financial risks. (The Dallas offer was not pursued at this time; perhaps the Texas heat scared them away.)

Despite the language difficulties, the Cistercians clearly communicated their pride – even their arrogance – about their Hungarian lineage and their affiliation with the Abbey of Zirc.

"[Hungarian is] a language that lacks resemblance to all major idioms of the world and conveys upon its native speakers a sense of both isolation and singularity," explained Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy in his 1998 account of the founding of the Cistercian Monastery in Dallas in *Cistercians in Texas*.

This "singularity" is captured in an old saying. Hungarians like to quote it in Latin as if it were an internationally known proverb: "*Extra Hungarian non est vita*" ("Outside Hungary, there is no life").

The Cistercians' intense pride in the Abbey of Zirc stemmed from the Order's 800-year history in Hungary and the abbey's far-reaching monastic, educational, and pastoral activities.

The Abbey of Zirc first became involved in education in the late 18th century. By the 20th century, five Cistercian *gymnasiums* (grades 5 through 12), considered among the finest schools in all of Hungary, were scattered throughout the country. All the teachers at these schools were Cistercian monks who had been educated at the best institutions in Europe. In 1942, the abbey's 159 priests included 68 with Ph.D.s and 91 with masters' degrees. In addition, 50 novices and students were studying for the priesthood.

Their activities were financed by the abbey's 40,000-acres, an endowment that had been accumulated since the Middle Ages and was turned —

### The players

## Bringing Zirc to America

**Abbot Wendelin Endrédi (1895-1981)** The Abbot of Zirc would preside over the final "glory years" of the Cistercians in Hungary. A near saintly figure, his decisive actions would preserve the legacy of Zirc by helping monks and student monks leave Hungary to establish a foundation in America. Arrested in October 1950, he was tortured and held in solitary confinement in miserable conditions for six years. "As a result of all these experiences," he said, "my life was enriched immeasurably. I feel no anger against any person who tortured me."

**Fr. Louis Lekai (1916-1994)** He initiated the 1945 plan to create an American "branch" of the Abbey of Zirc. Upon his arrival in America in 1949, he tirelessly and passionately scoured the states in search of the right home for the Hungarians. A world-class historian, he would teach history at the University of Dallas from 1956 to 1981, when he suffered a debilitating stroke.

**Fr. Anselm Nagy (1915-1988)** Abbot Wendelin sent Fr. Anselm to America in 1946 to investigate the possibilities for a foundation. A methodical mathematician, Fr. Anselm would serve as a steadying influence on the often passionate and independent-minded monks from Zirc. His tireless fundraising and conservative financial management would help the community build the monastery and school with virtually no debt.

**Abbot General Sighard Kleiner (1904-1995)** The young Abbot General, who was elected in 1953, hoped to reform the Cistercians into a more contemplative monastic order. These attempts would fail. While he would have his differences with the Hungarians, he would eventually support their new community in Texas.



Abbot Wendelin Endrédi

Abbot General Sighard Kleiner

Our Lady of

under the care of the monks — into a well oiled, first-class agricultural estate in the 20th century.

Alumni of the Cistercian schools ran many of the country's largest institutions. The Cistercians, in fact, had become so intertwined with government and society that the abbot of Zirc occupied an *ex officio* seat in the upper chamber of the Hungarian legislature.

Their proud 800-year heritage — and the Soviets' savage attempts to snuff it out — would sit like a large chip upon the shoulders of the Cistercians who escaped Hungary.

**“D**EAR DAMIAN,” WROTE FR. LOUIS TO Fr. Damian Szödényi early in the summer of 1953. “In pursuit of our well known goal, I will undertake an exploratory trip with Anselm in the first half of August. I beg you to prayerfully consider volunteering together with someone like Odo (Fr. Odo Egres) to undertake a similar trip to the Northwest.”

“It may be a very good idea to go to Canada also which you could do together with Anselm in the last week of August so that in the first days of September we could have a more fruitful discussion concerning our future. If after having exhausted all possibilities it will appear to be more prudent to wait for awhile, I will stop pushing.”

Damian prayerfully declined. Despite all his brilliance, vision, and passion, Fr. Louis had no official authority over any of the 20 or so Hungarian Cistercians living in America in 1953.

Besides, most of the Hungarian Cistercians in America were preoccupied with the daily chores of trying just to assimilate into their adopted land, earn degrees, or teach.

This diverse group of men — some urbane, others provincial, some liberal, others conservative, some artistic, others mathematical — had been uprooted from their homeland, deprived of family, friends, and the Abbey of Zirc. All longed for and needed some semblance of stability and normalcy.

Fr. Ralph March, a suave and talented monk with a playful sense of humor, had been directed to the US by his superiors in 1952. He begrudgingly left Paris, a city he had grown to love in the five years he spent there after earning his doctorate. (His dissertation on Cistercian chants remains to this day the most authoritative text on the subject.) Now, he was quickly sprouting roots in Milwaukee while running the Cistercian's study house there, teaching French at

**Their proud 800-year heritage — and the Soviets' savage attempts to snuff it out — would sit like a large chip upon the shoulders of the Cistercians who escaped Hungary.**

Marquette, and conducting the university choir.

With every passing year, Fr. Louis and Fr. Anselm knew it would become increasingly difficult to uproot monks like Fr. Ralph and shepherd their scattered flock to a common home.

Some hope arose in 1950 when Bishop John O'Hara of Buffalo, NY invited the Cistercians to consider operating a diocesan high school. The Cistercians agreed to send Fr. Damian and Fr. Louis to Buffalo in January 1952 before a formal agreement had been signed. The hopes in Buffalo were dashed, however, when Bishop O'Hara was transferred to Philadelphia.

The mantle of the Abbey of Zirc began to weigh heavily on Frs. Louis and Anselm.

In 1953, most Hungarian Cistercians lived at the beautiful Our Lady of Spring Bank Monastery on Lake Oconomowoc in Okauchee,

Wisconsin, 30 minutes west of Milwaukee. Spring Bank had been founded by the Cistercian Order (often referred to that of “the Common Observance” to distinguish it from the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance, also known as Trappists) in 1928. It was the first of many foundations (including ones in South America, Africa, and Vietnam) established by the Cistercians outside Europe during this period. While Spring Bank had succeeded in generating funds for the General House in Rome, it had struggled as a community.

From their perch in Rome, officials of the Cistercian Order believed the virtually homeless Hungarians would fit nicely into

the nearly vacant American facility.

But the Hungarians weren't so certain. They saw no prospects for a prep school in the sleepy resort town of Okauchee, Wisconsin or, for that matter, in Milwaukee, which already featured an elaborate system of Catholic schools feeding into Marquette University.

ASPHALT AND CARS STRETCHED AS FAR AS THE eye could see. Inside an unairconditioned car, four Cistercians sat pondering the treeless landscape and their decision to take a side trip to Texas. Their long hot drive from Mississippi to Fort Worth in late August 1953 had screeched to a halt on a two-lane highway about an hour east of their destination. Rush hour had traffic backed up around Dallas and the heat, which had been barely bearable at highway speeds, now enveloped them in a sweaty blanket.

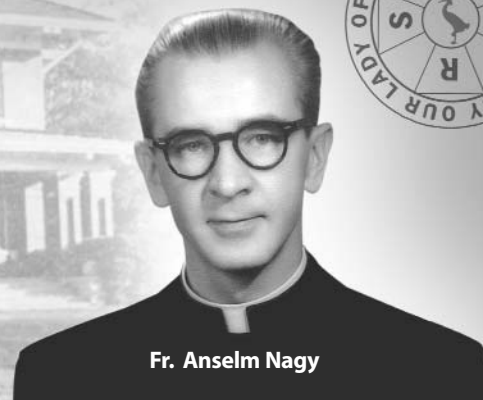




Springbank



Fr. Louis Lekai



Fr. Anselm Nagy

For Fr. Benedict, Fr. Thomas Fehér, Br. Melchior Chladek, and Fr. Theodosius Demén, this sweltering afternoon introduced them to the Lone Star State.

Just days before, they had driven from Wisconsin to a Spring Bank mission church in Mississippi to see a newly ordained Cistercian, Fr. Berthold, celebrate his first Mass. The idea of adding North Texas to their itinerary had been suggested by Fr. Thomas, who had majored in geography back in Hungary. He suggested a route back to Wisconsin that would take them through Texas where they'd have a chance to visit Fr. George Ferenczy and Fr. Odo.

Fr. George had initially come to Texas in the summer of 1951 to attend a workshop and to visit a Hungarian friend from Budapest who was heading up the department of music at Midwestern University in Wichita Falls.

During the course of his visit, Fr. George became acquainted with several Sisters of St. Mary of Namur who were teaching at the local Catholic high school. They had big plans.

In the near future, the sisters hoped to establish a four-year, co-educational Catholic university in Dallas to replace their junior college, Our Lady of Victory in Fort Worth. In the meantime, they had invited Fr. George and Fr. Odo to begin teaching at Our Lady of Victory.

Fr. George, a dashing concert pianist with a Ph.D. in French Literature, had come to believe the sisters could actually make their grand dream come true.

For their part, the sisters saw the Cistercians' unexpected appearance on the prairie as pure Providence. The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur had been founded by a Belgian Cistercian named Joseph Minsart who had been driven from his monastery by the French Revolution. And, practically speaking, they must have wondered where else they were going to find a group of highly educated priests willing to join them in starting their new university.

As the sun mercifully began to set, the weary Hungarians found Fort Worth. Within an hour or so of their arrival, they were laughing and talking at Fr. Odo's favorite restaurant where they feasted on some unforgettable fried chicken.

Their harsh first impression of Texas softened slightly.

The next morning, Fr. Odo drove the visitors to the convent of the

**MUSIC TO HIS EARS**  
Fr. George Ferenczy's acquaintance with the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur eventually led to the Cistercians' settling in Dallas.

Sisters of St. Mary of Namur to see Fr. George.

"I can still remember walking up to the convent," recalled Fr. Melchior recently, "and hearing beautiful piano music coming from the basement." The Cistercians appreciated Fr. George's message even more than his music.

"When you go back to Spring Bank," Fr. George emphasized to the four travelers inside, "tell the fathers that this is the place where we should settle. They need educators and priests here and they would love to have us."

**T**HE FIST BANGING ON THE DESK BELONGED TO 34-year-old Fr. Benedict. The usually serene Fr. Benedict, who would chair the the University of Dallas physics department in a few years, was expressing himself in no

uncertain terms on this cold December 1953 afternoon in Wisconsin. Across the table sat Abbot General Sighard Kleiner. The newly elected abbot general had come to Spring Bank from Rome to conduct a canonical visitation, one of his first acts in his new job.

Fr. Benedict knew Abbot General Sighard rather well, having spent the latter part of 1950 and much of 1951 with him in Rome after his escape with the 12 student monks from Hungary. Kleiner had wasted little time in rubbing the Hungarians the wrong way.

"It seems an act of Providence that the Communists have closed your schools in Hungary," he told the junior monks as they arrived in Rome. "Now you can forget about teaching and truly become monks by concentrating on prayer and work." (By work, Kleiner meant manual labor.)

"Comments like these really got under our skin," recalled Fr. Melchior.

But this was the only kind of monasticism Kleiner recognized. He had, in fact, formed a reform monastery in Hauterive, Switzerland. It was from this Swiss abbey that he had been promoted and brought to Rome as procurator general.

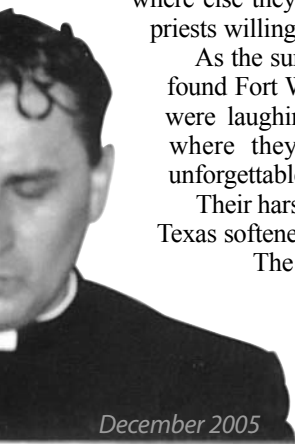
So in their meeting, Fr. Benedict found it difficult to contain his emotions, despite Kleiner's new rank as abbot general.

"Never in my life have I behaved so harshly with any of my superiors," recalled Fr. Benedict. "But he didn't listen to anyone."

The abbot general insisted that the monks at Spring Bank adhere to a schedule of prayers and agricultural work. Ph.D.s or no Ph.D.s, the monks at Spring Bank would not be allowed to teach; they would work in the fields.

**"I would spend the recess with the first graders ... I learned a lot of American speech from them."**

— Fr. Benedict Monostori, on his first year teaching in Texas



# Building a monaste

Kleiner probably believed that the refugee Hungarians would willingly acquiesce to his reform movement, just grateful to have a place to call home. Where else were they to go?

But Kleiner misjudged the Hungarians.

At the concluding meeting of the visitation, Abbot General Sighard addressed the Hungarian monks of Spring Bank. He didn't mince his words: it was his way or the highway.

The vast majority of the Hungarian Cistercians, both young and old, chose the highway.

Upon his departure, the abbot general left behind a set of statutes that dictated the lifestyle of Spring Bank. The abbot general included a clause that granted those unwilling to follow his demands permission to leave and to find a new home elsewhere.

Two months later, at a February 1, 1954 conventual meeting, the exiled monks asked the abbot general to appoint Fr. Anselm as their superior. They also decided to accept an invitation from Bishop Thomas K. Gorman, coadjutor bishop of the Dallas-Fort Worth Diocese (Bishop Joseph Patrick Lynch, who had served as bishop since 1911, lay ill in the last year of his life).

Fr. Anselm directed five priests – Fr. Damian, Fr. Benedict, Fr. Thomas, Fr. Lambert Simon, and Fr. Christopher Rabay – to move to Texas that summer to begin preparing the foundation for a monastic community based on the traditions of Zirc. The Cistercians were going to help the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur start a new Catholic university in Dallas.

“SHE MUST HAVE THOUGHT I SMELLED LIKE A BEAR,” wrote Fr. Damian of two gifts he received from his sister Barbara upon their first reunion in America in 1949, “because she bought me some shaving lotion and stick deodorant. My American civilization had begun.”

By the time Fr. Damian drove his Oldsmobile (a gift from his brother-in-law) to Dallas in the summer of 1953, he had been immersed in American society for over four years. He had leapt into a number of assignments in a variety of locations, anxious to refine his speech and to become familiar with American customs.

The other four transplants were not so lucky.

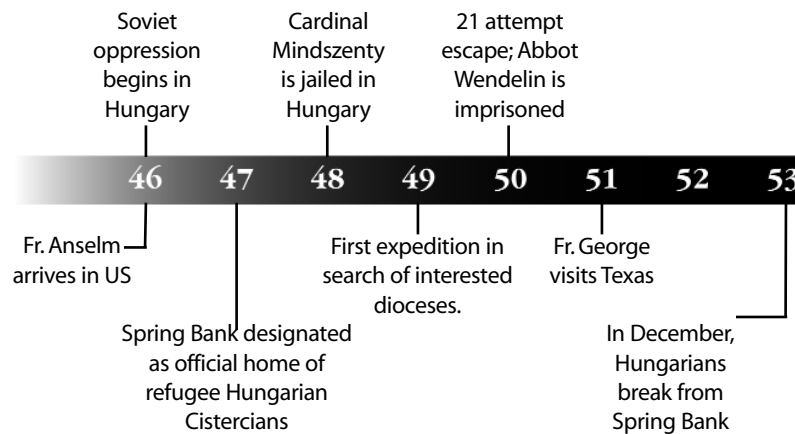
“You will do confessions on Saturday, two masses on Sunday, and then,” the pastor of St. Cecilia told Fr. Benedict at their first meeting, “we start school on Monday. You will teach two classes of religion.”

“But Monsignor,” Fr. Benedict said slowly, struggling just to communicate, “I don't speak English.”

“You will learn,” he answered.

“I would spend the recess with the first graders,” Fr. Benedict remembered. “They were always ready to chat and babble, and they didn't expect me to say much. I learned a lot of American speech from them.”

One day, the cook at St. Cecilia's, an African-American



woman, pulled Fr. Benedict aside at the refectory.

“I saw you on the street car yesterday,” she said. “You were sitting in the wrong section. Don't you know better?” (Later in 1955, Rosa Parks would refuse to give up her seat in the white section of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama.)

“I was thrown into the water,” Fr. Benedict acknowledged of those first years in Dallas. “It was sink or swim. It was exciting and I enjoyed it very much.”

Not all of the transplanted Hungarians, however, enjoyed the many challenges of assimilating into the American way of life. Unlike most of his brothers, Fr. Thomas was a reluctant émigré who had to leave Hungary or face a long prison term on drummed up charges of “anti-democratic propaganda.”

Fr. Thomas and Fr. Damian spent that first fall in Texas teaching at St. Edward's Academy for Girls.

“It was very difficult for him,” reflected Fr. Damian in 1969, “he really suffered, but at St. Edward's Academy, the girls were polite and well-disciplined. They did not take advantage of Thomas' poor English.

“Later when he was teaching in our preparatory school, he was lost amongst the boys; he became their fun priest. He was frightened of the students and was not capable of disciplining them.”

The Cistercians liked to enjoy themselves at monthly gatherings in Fr. Benedict's quarters at St. Cecilia's Parish (the only one

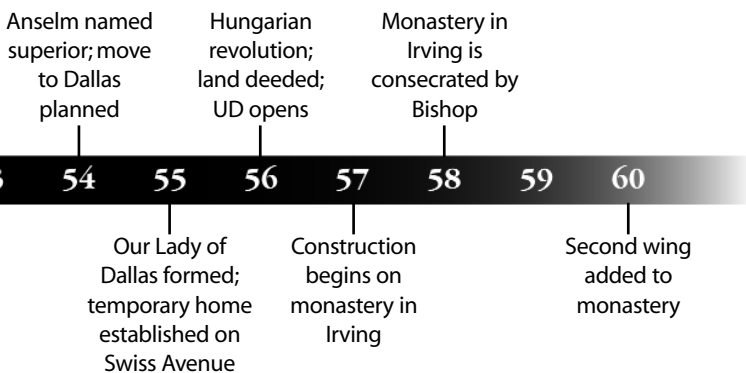


Photo courtesy of Solvia Regina, September 1955

## SWISS BLESSING

**Bishop Thomas K. Gorman consecrates the Cistercians' first chapel in Dallas, located in the library of Bishop Lynch's former home at 4946 Swiss Avenue, on May 19, 1955.**

# ry in the New World



of the bunch to have an air conditioned room). They played the traditional Hungarian card game of tarokk and talked before dining at The Torch, a well-known Greek restaurant located just blocks away on Davis. Then they'd return for more tarokk.

"We always had a glorious time," remembered Fr. Damian in his memoirs. "We were the first Cistercian 'torch' of this City. We had a lot of enthusiasm, strength, and love to burn."

The Cistercians were serving as priests and educators. All that remained was to gather the scattered under one roof so they could begin praying together as a monastic community.

**T**HE LIBRARY OF BISHOP Lynch's former home at 4946 Swiss Avenue was filled on a sunny Ascension Thursday, May 19, 1955. Priests, nuns, and laity had come to celebrate along with Bishop Gorman the promise that the Cistercians were bringing to the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth.

Bishop Gorman had made the house available for rent to the Cistercians a few months after Bishop Lynch's death in August 1954. Fr. Damian and Fr. Thomas had begun the process of cleaning it up and transforming it into a monastery, complete with a chapel in the exquisitely wood-paneled library.

Earlier in the day, Fr. Melchior had celebrated his First Mass, just two days after arriving in Dallas from Wisconsin and nearly a week after having been ordained at Spring Bank. He had chosen to wait until his arrival in Dallas to celebrate this special service.

At the open house that afternoon, the bishop blessed and inaugurated the monastery and chapel of the Cistercian Fathers of Dallas (as they called themselves at the time).

"From here, through your talents and spiritual endowment as a group and as individuals," he said, "there will flow forth into every corner of this diocese the spiritual character which you possess.

"It is a genuine source of satisfaction to know that here will be accomplished, day after day, the Holy Office of the Church in our behalf. We feel sure, too, that this will be a house of study, a center of scholarship, a place of learning."

"Your coming among us will be a blessing," he added. "As a result of your ministry, there will grow up a sturdier, a wiser, a more spiritual generation of priests, religious, and people in the Diocese

of Dallas and Fort Worth.

"Again, my dear Fathers, I bid you a thousand times, 'Welcome!'"

Gorman's remarks reflected both practical and personal aspects of the bishop's desire to invite the Cistercians to his diocese.

First, the Dallas-Fort Worth Diocese stretched from Lubbock and Amarillo to Texarkana. He needed priests to cover this gigantic territory adequately.

Second, a highly educated man who had earned degrees from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and at the University of Louvain in Belgium, Gorman understood the value of education. During his tenure, he built 25 new parochial schools, Bishop Dunne and Bishop Lynch high schools in Dallas, plus other high schools in Fort Worth, Tyler, and Wichita Falls, not to mention his role in the founding of the University of Dallas and Holy Trinity Seminary in 1965.

He also seemed to appreciate the Hungarians' talents, their promise, and their heartache.

"It is our hope that as your work grows and develops [here]," Gorman said, "it will in some measure recompense you for what must be and what will always be the pain of separation from your native homeland.

"We sincerely trust that God will again smile upon that country and bring to it peace and freedom, both civil and religious."

The next day, the monks began a full monastic schedule, living according to the ideals that Fr. Louis had first expressed nearly ten years before.

**"Your coming among us will be a blessing."**

— Bishop Thomas K. Gorman at the consecration of the chapel at 4946 Swiss Avenue, May 19, 1955

FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1955, Fr. Anselm worked to bring all the Hungarian Cistercians to Dallas under their new corporate identity, the "Cistercian Monastery Our Lady of Dallas" (which had been incorporated on March 25, 1955).

A little more than a month after the May celebration, Fr. Anselm received word that the Holy See had appointed him as the "Vicar (delegated superior) of the Abbot of Zirc" and given him jurisdiction

over all the monks of Zirc who were no longer in Hungary and did not belong to Spring Bank.

His new title would not make his work of uniting the scattered any easier. Some had firmly established their careers elsewhere by the time the community moved to Texas. Others wanted to wait and see whether the planned University of Dallas would materialize.

In the meantime, Fr. Anselm worked to raise funds and to secure land for a permanent monastery. The land negotiations took on special importance. The Cistercians were seeking a sufficient number of acres to accommodate their planned prep school – which all of the monks considered essential to preserving the legacy of Zirc.

Most of the other monks continued teaching or studying in preparation for their roles at the University of Dallas, which would open its doors in the fall of 1956.

While Texas may not have been their first choice as a home for the American incarnation of Zirc, they were needed here and they were determined to make it work.

"At the border in 1950," Fr. Benedict reflected, "I decided that where Providence leads me, that's where I will live and work. I will do my best there. I will be at home there."

"I never regretted settling in Texas," Fr. Benedict said. "It is still strange, but this makes it interesting and adds some spice to life."

Like that first fried chicken dinner in Fort Worth in '53.

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# Finding a way

*The freshman and sophomore years can be tumultuous as students begin to make difficult decisions for themselves. That's when record-breaking tailback Will Murchison '06 learned a lot about the artist inside the football player, and vice versa.*

*By David E. Stewart*

**"T**HIS IS REALLY SPECIAL," gushed Mike Bulger as he surveyed the crowd gathering a half hour before the SPC-II Championship game. His words and sparkling eyes captured the feeling of many on this perfect Friday evening in early November at Hawk Field.

Bulger (father of Brent Bulger '83) coached football part-time at Cistercian under three head coaches, from Bob Cahill in the seventies and Bob Haaser in the early eighties to Tom Hillary, his SMU teammate.

A thick procession (nearly the entire Upper School) dressed and painted in black passed by Bulger like a marching band without instruments. They would take their customary position in the stands much earlier than normal tonight.

Alumni, a large number of whom hadn't seen campus since their graduation, were beginning to gather along the fence. Tonight they would stand five and six deep, remembering old times and reflecting on the meaning of a Cistercian team achieving perfection.

The school's parking lots overflowed more quickly than usual; the security team would report that 176 cars parked on the UD side of Highway 114. (Most of these were likely Cistercian supporters since Austin St. Stephen's brought many fans in chartered buses.)

Inside the locker room, Coach McCarthy was introducing the team to a special guest, Jeff Lockhart '93. Fourteen years before, Lockhart had sped to 1,433 yards, leading the 1992 Hawks to a school best 9-2 record.

Two weeks before against Houston Episcopal, Lockhart had watched as Will Murchison '06 eclipsed his single-season rushing record. Now, he was sharing his feelings about the game the Hawks were about to play.

"You have a unique opportunity tonight to become the best team in Cistercian history," Lockhart said. "Cistercian is special and I want you to honor all the great Cistercian teams by playing a good, tough game with class. You have a chance to be perfect. I know you will go out there and take advantage of that chance, not just for yourselves but for the wonderful school and alumni you represent."

In August, few could have imagined this scene.

"I hoped that we might compete for the SPC-II Championship," said Steve McCarthy, Cistercian's head football coach. "But I never dreamed we'd have a chance to go undefeated."

No one else did either. The Hawks had lost a talented group of players to graduation and only a few sophomores were ready to step up.

But these same questions arise every year, and somehow, Cistercian manages to field competitive teams.

"I have a lot of respect for Cistercian's football program," said Phillip Farhat, head coach at Oakridge. "Year in and year out, they put together very solid teams. They are very disciplined, they play hard, and their kids work well together."

In his 16 years as head coach, Tom



Hillary's teams went 93-65-2. Since taking over after Hillary's passing in early 2000, McCarthy has compiled a record of 42-20.

"Cistercian just does an outstanding job with their football program," said Aaron Beck, who has been coaching in the SPC for 20 years and now serves as head coach at ESD. "All the Cistercian coaches were tutored by the best, Tom Hillary, and they have done a great job of carrying on that Cistercian tradition."

"The boys' work ethic is unbelievable," added Bart Epperson, head coach at Trinity Valley. "I talk with Steve [McCarthy] all the time, and he's amazed at how they push themselves academically and athletically."

"Cistercian," Beck insisted, "is the measuring stick for SPC-II football."



**Disguised (2002), oil on canvas, 24" x 20"**

*"I had always taken football really seriously and put a lot of pressure on myself to do well ... At that point [freshman year], I really wasn't enjoying it."*

— Will Murchison

**A**TACKLE DURING AN October 2002 drill brought freshman Will Murchison to the ground with a thud. It resembled the dozens and dozens of such hits he endured during his first year of high school football. Freshmen runners

are, after all, like snacks on which varsity defenders feast.

During weekly scrimmages to prepare the varsity defense for the upcoming game, Murchison was cast in the role of the opposing team's star runner. Unfortunately, the

opposing team's offensive line would not be blocking for him. The odds were tilted significantly in favor of the older, stronger defenders.

Murchison, however, was hardly your typical freshman. In addition to starring on Thursdays for the JV, he had earned the right to carry the ball occasionally on Friday nights, and not just in garbage time. By all accounts, Murchison should have been proud of his progress freshman year.

He wasn't.

After the hit on this day, Murchison didn't get up. The coaches came to his aid and attempted to pick him up. He stayed down. Silently, he was crying.

Football had never been just a game to Will Murchison. He is, after all, the grandson of former Dallas Cowboys owner Clint Murchison.

"I've always been scared of football," he said. "I took it really seriously and put a lot of pressure on myself to do well."

"At that point, I really wasn't enjoying it."

While Murchison may have been exceeding everyone else's expectations on the football field, he wasn't close to meeting his. The weight of that burden and a number of other issues had taken its toll. Football was no longer fun.

"Compared to eighth grade, football moves at a faster pace freshman year, physically and emotionally," Murchison said. "It is a grind."

"In Upper School at Cistercian, you also begin to broaden your horizons."

"I began to realize that art was something I could do," he said. "I realized art did not have to be realism, which is something I can't do. I broadened my view of art and I

**UNBRIDLED** Will Murchison breaks loose for a fistful of his 338 yards in the 35-0 win over St. Stephen's in the SPC-II finale.



Photo by Tim Mehlman '07

began to recognize my talent.”

The hours he spent in the studio above his garage increased. His passion for literature and history also grew.

“I was beginning to feel like sports was a hindrance, I wanted to do so many other things.”

When Sam Bowler’s mom passed away that fall, everyone pitched in to try and support their friend.

“That was pretty tough, seeing your best friend have to go through that,” Murchison said. “It was a very hard time for our whole class.”

Football had taken a back seat to life.

**“T**HE END OF FRESHMAN year and most of our sophomore year were very chaotic times,” Bowler recalled. “We were pretty crazy.”

“I was rebellious about a lot of different things,” Murchison admitted, “and I was angry and mean a lot of the time.”

“I tell parents that sophomore year is the single toughest year they will face at Cistercian,” said Bob Haaser, Murchison’s form master.

“Some blame it on the fumes and perfumes (cars and girls). But our boys in this

class, especially Sam, were dealing with much tougher issues.”

Initially, these issues tore at the heart of the class as boys searched for answers, each in their own way.

“Will was full of angst and defiance about sports, boundaries, everything,” remembered Elise Murchison. “He questioned things in a very unpleasant manner.”

“One minute, he could handle a situation; the next, there’d be an explosion.”

“I think art was great for Will,” she said. “No recrimination or instruction or consequences. It was a haven in which he could

play out all of his emotions, find some of his own answers, find a center, a calm.”

“Painting has become more than a hobby,” Murchison acknowledged in an essay on his passion for art. “It is intimidating and at times thoroughly disagreeable.”

“A hobby may be set down and continued at a later date. It is filler, a time-eater, and is, of course, always enjoyable. But painting is no hobby. I hate it.”

“The beginning is most frightening,” he continued. “The white is too clean, too nice, but I must remember the many other beginnings and ultimate successes. The intimidation is the worry that this one will not match the last, that this one will uncover how truly base my talents are.”

“I have a fear of failing.”

Murchison’s artwork wasn’t failing; it began to win recognition.

“His work comes very much from his mind, and not from his observation of the world,” commented Roberto Munguia, Cistercian’s resident artist and art teacher. “It is beautifully composed. He pays a lot of attention to the quality of the paint on the canvas. Lately, he often uses maps and pages from books and then buries them in paint to evoke an idea.”

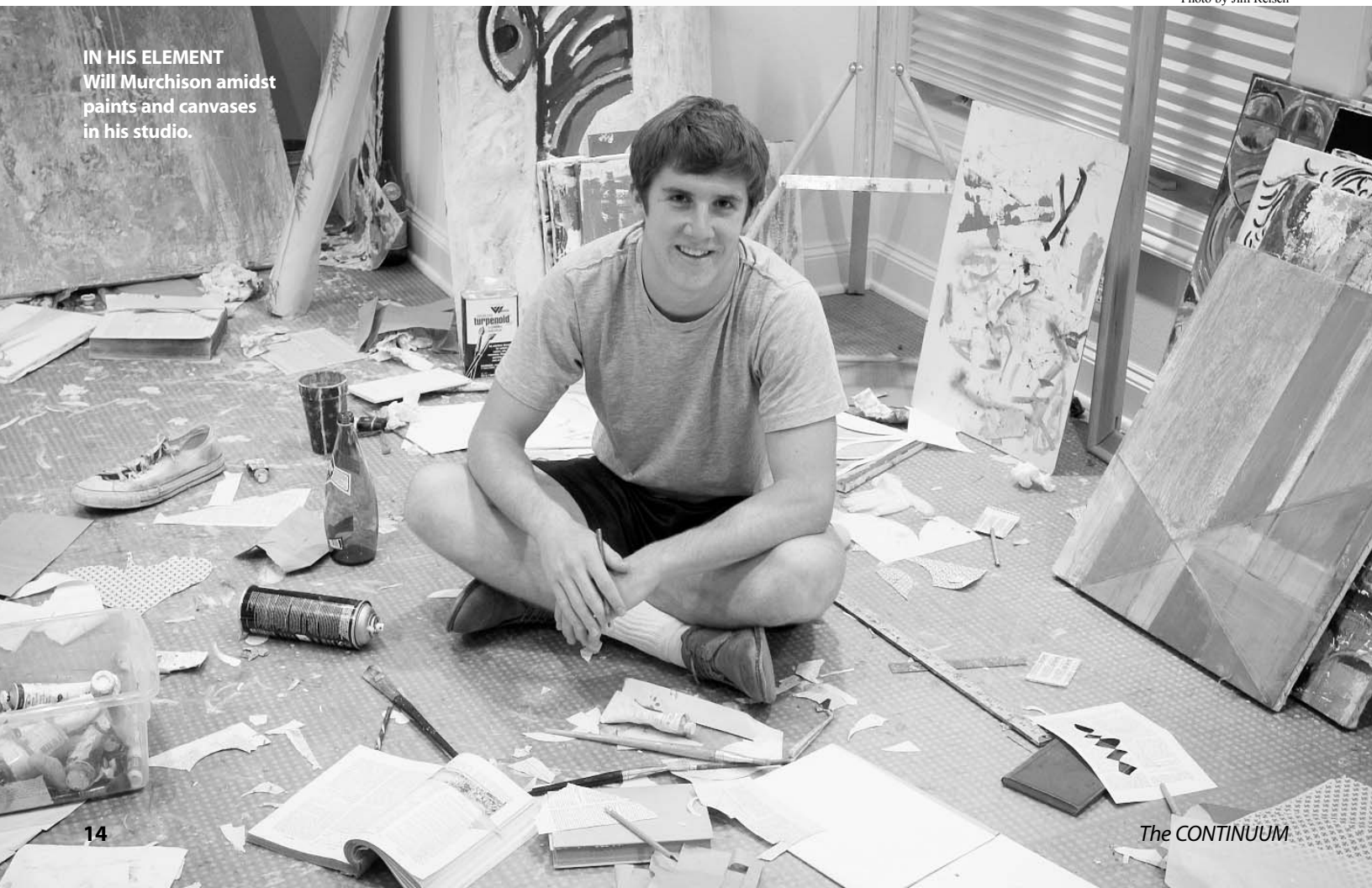
“He keeps it very simple and spurs the viewer’s imagination. He actually makes

*“As a teenager, you try to pigeon-hole yourself, to help define who you are. Jock, artist, punk. I was seeing myself as an artist.”*

— Will Murchison

Photo by Jim Reisch

**IN HIS ELEMENT**  
Will Murchison amidst paints and canvases in his studio.



them part of the creative process, which is a hallmark of modernism.”

(Other artists in the class also were blossoming, like Stephen Gemoules '06, Paul Hedrick '06, Travis LaMothe '06, Patrick Romeo '06, Sam Theis '06, Mike Tomaso '06, and Giulio Yaquinto '06, whose portfolio was recently accepted by the Art Institute of Chicago.)

Murchison was particularly influenced by Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993) a second-generation abstract expressionist.

“I once read that you must destroy in order to create,” wrote Murchison in his essay, referring to Diebenkorn.

“The finely detailed right corner of the painting becomes an attachment of great meaning to me, but to the painting it is a hindrance and a distraction ... A painter can never become attached to the work; for if he does, the work is no longer his own because it transcends his perceived ability to control.

“But I fear change and new beginnings. I hate to destroy ... but with a dripping white brush I smother the image. I stab it ferociously with a pencil for added effect. I force myself to change.”

**“A**S A TEENAGER, YOU try to pigeon-hole yourself, to help define who you are,” Murchison reflected recently. “Jock, artist, punk. I was seeing myself as an artist. I talked to my sister and told her, ‘I don’t want to be the jock.’”

He quit track in the spring.

Then, in late spring, the football team gathered for a couple of weeks before exams. Coaches were telling Murchison he would be the starting running back as a sophomore.

“I didn’t really enjoy football anymore, and I didn’t want to hear that,” he remembered. “You shouldn’t be expected to do something you really don’t enjoy.”

Expectations were piling on top of expectations. Football appeared to be a canvas he could not control.

He approached Bob Haaser, his form master.

“He was really open,” remembered Murchison.

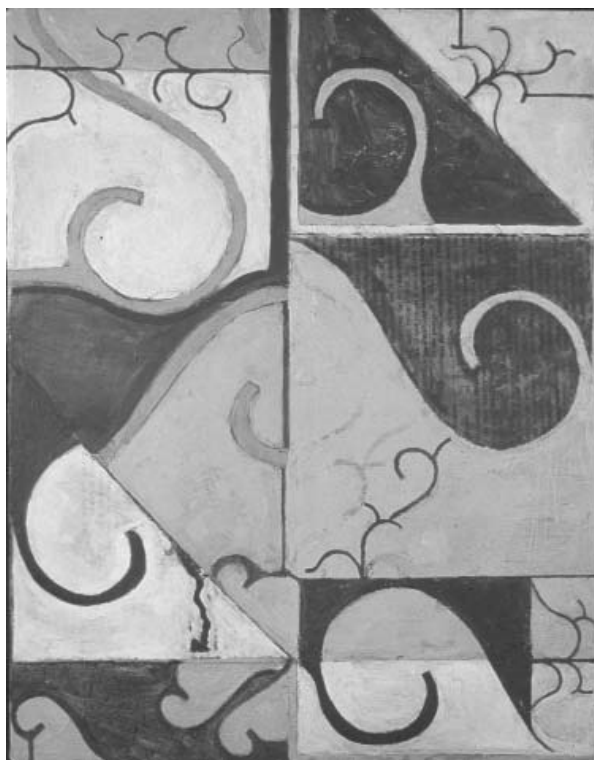
“Will came by several times and we discussed football and art,” Haaser said. “We had long discussions. I just tried to point out positive pathways.

“‘What should I do?’ he’d ask. And I would tell him, ‘That’s for you to decide. This is a life decision. I can’t make it for you.’”

“I saw Will growing up by going through this, deciding where to put his time and talent,” he added. “This period — from near the end of the freshman year through much of the sophomore year — is when the boys have to make some choices for themselves. Parents, teachers, and coaches can no longer structure all of their time for them. They have to begin doing it for themselves.”

Murchison approached his parents.

His mom reminded him of the parable of the talents. “God has given you the talent to



*Untitled (2005), oil and paper on canvas, 24" x 20"*

play football,” Mrs. Murchison suggested, “You shouldn’t bury it.”

“You don’t understand how much fear I have had to deal with,” he told his mom. He was almost in tears. “Don’t you understand? I just can’t do this.”

Haaser communicated frequently with the Murchisons and Coach McCarthy as they monitored the situation.

“Will is becoming his own man, and that’s positive,” Haaser explained to them. “We have to give him some space and let him make his own decisions. We have to let him grow into his own man.”

“Bob was so terrific,” said Mrs. Murchison. “He tried to intervene in a positive way while Will was having trouble communicating.

“That’s part of the benefit of the form master system,” she added. “They have so much patience and wisdom with the boys. They understand the way boys grow up.”

Coach McCarthy wanted Murchison to play, but understood that the boys and academics always come first at Cistercian.

“It all worked out,” said McCarthy. Murchison’s absence created an opportunity for senior Connor Arras '04, who hadn’t played football since freshman year. Matt Chee-Awai '05 also began to develop.

“Cistercian is all about academic excellence,” McCarthy said. “Athletics are just an extracurricular activity; it’s their way of venting, taking their mind off their studies.”

Many of Murchison’s classmates decided that if their best player wasn’t playing, they wouldn’t either. Out of the 20 who played freshman year, only six came out for football as sophomores.

But none of his classmates ever questioned Murchison’s values or machismo for choosing art over football.

“At Cistercian,” Murchison emphasized, “there are so many kids with so many different talents. Everyone seems to recognize and celebrate each other as they pursue the intellectual side of things. That becomes the cool thing instead of sports. I enjoyed expressing my intellectual talents like so many of my classmates were.”

For the first time since third grade, Will Murchison wouldn’t play football in the fall.

**“P**AINTING, FOR ME, has the power to captivate and to pull me away from time and into the painting,” Murchison wrote in his essay on painting. “It is the reason why I

find myself dirtied and stained at two or three in the morning staring at some creation of color on a canvas.”

“When I see Will come into the classroom early in the morning before first bell,” wrote Jackie Greenfield for Murchison’s college recommendation, “he always has a little grin on his face to greet me. No matter how many hours into the night the canvas wrestled with him, he is able to smile through the almost numbing sleepiness, and his gesture does not go unnoticed.”

“I have heard Will say that he wishes art could be a hobby, but for him it cannot,” she continued. “Perhaps if he thought about it he would wish that this drive to pursue the insides, the guts, of life could be a hobby as well. But it will not be.”

At times during sophomore year, he began to think about returning to play football.

“I was afraid I wouldn’t be accepted by



Photo by Benjamin Cohen

**DYNAMIC DUO** Jeff Lockhart '93 (left) congratulates Will Murchison '06 on surpassing his single-season rushing record after the Houston Episcopal win.

## Cistercian's top ground gainers

(by single season rushing totals)

Season	Player	Yards
'05	Will Murchison '06	2,006
'92	Jeff Lockhart '93	1,433
'86	Alex Lopez '89	1,189
'93	Lowell Mason '94	1,170
'94	Bubba Futerfas '95	1,120
'83	Greg O'Hagan '84	1,077
'85	Alex Lopez '89	1,026

the team," he admitted. "But I thought it was important, with my talents, to express them. I knew it would be hard work but fun.

"I also felt like I had something to prove, that I am not a quitter," he explained. "I wanted to show more diligence and to prove to the team that I could deal with it."

At some other schools, the coaches may have told Murchison, "Don't bother." But not at Cistercian.

"It's a good thing when kids eventually decide to play because they can help us," McCarthy said. "We've had so many contributions from guys who decided to play just as seniors, like Eric Ojeda '05 last year. So, we welcomed Will back."

As a junior, Murchison played behind Matt Chee-Awai at running back, but he contributed to the team's ability to advance to the SPC-II title game.

As a senior, he stepped into the driver's seat and the spotlight with an easy grace.

"I thought we'd be worse this year than last year," said Murchison, a co-captain. "Last year's senior class, for the most part, had played football all four years in Upper School."

"Many of us hadn't played as sophomores," Murchison explained. "In a way, we undermined the whole system. So for us to come in and act like leaders, well, I didn't think it would work."

But it did work. The class of '06 – which had fractured as sophomores – had since come together in a special way.

"Having suffered together through the death of a classmate's mother," suggested Haaser, "ended up being the glue that pulled the class back together.

They became very supportive of each other." That spread to the football team.

"We accept everybody," explained Murchison. "By our trying to be very accepting in football, the whole team took on that attitude. We did it not because we had to but because we like to be that way."

This inclusive leadership style by the seniors – Bowler, Terrell Haines '06, David Haley '06, Kurt Klinke '06, Chris McGowan '06, George Morgan '06, Murchison, Jake Tenney '06, Sam Theis '06, and Jere Thompson '06 – created great team chemistry.

Despite loads of media coverage (including several television reports), Murchison carried himself with his usual unassuming, self-effacing, and happy demeanor.

After Murchison's 357-yard perform-

ance against Oakridge (a school single-game record) the media scrutiny picked up dramatically. But Murchison's focus remained squarely on team goals.

Against Houston Episcopal, Murchison broke Jeff Lockhart's single-season rushing record in the most unexpected and most exciting game of the year, an overtime win against the Hawks' lone SPC-I opponent.

Now Murchison and the seniors sensed that their class – one that had been dominated in seventh and eighth grade football – would have a chance to make a little history.

"The procession of the students before the championship game, all in black, showed the nature of the classes as they go through Cistercian," Murchison said. "Everybody really enjoys what their fellow classmates are doing, no matter how divergent their interests may be. The students were really into what we were doing and they wanted to be a part of it."

So in this game that meant so much to so many in the Cistercian community, the Class of 2006 put the finishing touches on a work that was eight years in the making.

Murchison had smothered his insecurities that had made football so difficult years before. He had made it his own and in doing so, he had integrated himself into the team. He had taken control of that "finely detailed right corner of the painting [that] becomes ... a hindrance and a distraction."

"It is in the finished work that I realize painting has taught me many things," Murchison wrote in his essay on painting. "It has taught me about change and about persistence, about beauty and about fear."

"Taking a year off from football," he reflected, "taught me that I need to take all my decisions seriously. It was the first time I realized that what I did would have a big impact on my life. That year wasn't coming back."

"You have a few narrow chances in life," he said. "You need to take advantage of them."

Murchison, by the way, ran for 338 of his record 2,006 yards in the 35-0 victory in the championship game.

In leading the Hawks to their first undefeated season in 36 years of varsity football, his total yardage figure seemed to salute his classmates.

Players, family, and fans celebrated on the field for an hour after the game.

Mike Bulger was right. This was special.

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## The road to 2,006 yards

Will Murchison's game-by-game rushing statistics for the 2005 season

	Carries	Yards	Avg.	TDs
Fort Worth Country Day	17	201	11.8	3
Pantego Christian	20	105	5.3	1
Trinity Valley	23	174	7.6	2
All Saints	19	69	3.6	0
St. Stephen's	29	233	8.0	3
St. Andrew's	8	108	13.5	2
Oakridge	36	357*	9.9	2
Episcopal School of Dallas	29	141	4.9	1
Episcopal Houston	18	148	8.2	0
Texas Military Institute	5	126	25.2	1
St. Stephen's SPC-II tilt	29	342	11.7	3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>2,006</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>18</b>

\* Tied for top game of the year in the Metroplex, public or private.



# Hawks roll to SPC-II crown and first undefeated season

“It was a magical year,” reflected Head Coach Steve McCarthy on the Hawks’ first-ever undefeated football season.

The signs that this team was for real came against All Saints. Cistercian came in limping a bit which forced JV quarterback **Connor Heard '08** into action on passing downs. Heard completed several clutch passes to **Matthew Abola '07** for touchdowns that proved enough for 19-0 win. Cistercian held All Saints to an astounding 23 yards of total offense for the night.

Cistercian’s defense – anchored by linebackers **Chase Campbell '07**, **Carlton Cornelius '07**, and **Kurt Klinke '06** – played superbly all year long, allowing an average of only 9.3 points per game (a school record).

**Will Murchison '06**, as detailed elsewhere in this edition, set the single-season rushing record. Credit for this record also goes to the very effective offensive line of **Kyle Welch '07**, **George Morgan '06**, **Patrick Flanigan '07**, **Terrell Haines '06**, and **Mark Ratway '07**.

When ESD arrived at Hawk Field in late October, both teams had not lost a game in conference play. ESD featured a highly touted, 6' 5", 225 lb. quarterback with a rifle arm, excellent speed, and an outstanding collection of receivers.

Cistercian’s nickel defense, however, proved they were up to the task, collecting a total of six interceptions. But ESD roared back from a 28-7 third-quarter deficit and had a chance to score late, but **David Haley '06** came up with his third interception of the night to put the game away.

Photo by Tim Mohlman '07



**CHAMPIONSHIP CELEBRATION** Players, coaches, parents, and fans lingered for nearly an hour after the game to savor the Hawks’ win over St. Stephen’s for the SPC-II Championship and the only undefeated season in the 36-year history of varsity football at Cistercian.

If fans thought it couldn’t get any more exciting, they were wrong. The next week, Houston Episcopal held a 20-6 lead in the third frame. Cistercian was headed for defeat. “That was truly a magical night,” McCarthy said of the Hawks’ comeback that ended with a 27-20 overtime win.

“You have to get some breaks, everything has to fall just right for us to win that one, and it did. It was really exciting.”

The 35-0 win over St. Stephen’s in the SPC-II Championship game showcased Murchison and the offensive line. The game appeared as one time-consuming drive after another. Players celebrated the 11-0 season on the field for an hour afterwards.

All Conference honors went to **Matthew Abola '07**, **Chase Campbell '07**, **Sam Bowler '06**, **David Haley '06**, **George Morgan '06**, **Will Murchison '06**, and **Jere Thompson '06**.

# Senior leadership guides cross country team’s success

The summer’s hard work – each team member completed at least 300 total miles and at least one 15 km jog around Bachman Lake – paid off early at the W.W. Samuell Invitational. The team won first in the 4A & Under division, losing only to Jesuit in the 5A class.

But by mid season, the team set its sights on breaking into the top five at SPC. Rededicating themselves to the task at hand, it appeared possible. But while the Hawks ran to a sixth place finish, it ranked as the third-best finish in school history.

**David Pruit '06** finished in the top 20 at SPC, which earned him All-SPC honors.

“David was the team’s steadfast leader, in word but most strongly in

example,” Head Coach Barry A. McCain '02 said.

“He led the team in every race and every workout and didn’t complain. He was the heart and soul of our group.”

Pruit, along with **James Hansell '06**, and **Paul Hedrick '06** served as captains.

**Vincent Zimmern '06** and **Erik Tanner '07**, also made important contributions over the course of the year. **H.T. Flanagan '07** improved his times significantly.

**Richard Newcomb '08** not only pushed himself, but he also spear-headed a very strong group of sophomores that included **Christopher Shea '08**, **Alejandro Torres '08**, **Patrick Butler '08**, **Clay Gimenez '08**, and **Ian McLaughlin '08**.

“The seniors will be missed,” McCain added, “but the underclassmen have learned well under their guidance and should provide an exciting product next year.”

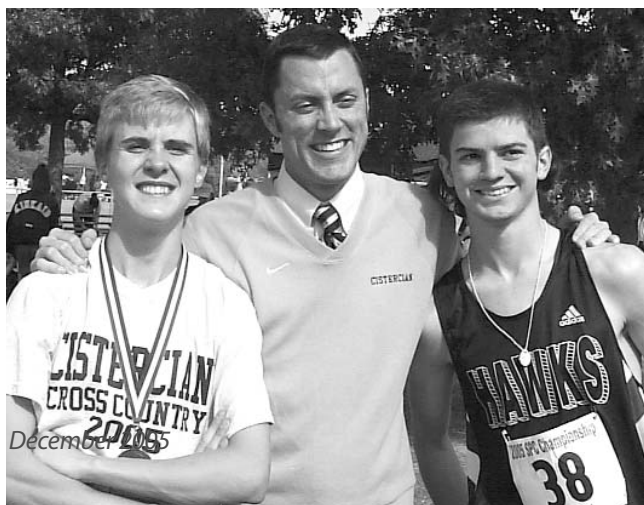


Photo by Tom Pruitt

**THE A TEAM** (from left to right) All-SPC **David Pruit '06**, Coach **Barry A. McCain '02**, and **Jon Paul Heyne '06** at the SPC Cross Country Meet in October.

# Learning from my second trip to the Holy Land

If you agree with the statement that “what matters most is not the person of Jesus, but his teaching,” then make a visit to Galilee and Jerusalem.

If Jesus’ mother lurks in your memory only as the blurred figure of a heavenly Queen, go to the cave in Bethlehem and to the only well of the old city of Nazareth where Mary and Jesus drew their daily water.



**On Prayer**

*Fr. Roch Kereszty*

Galilee on the Shabbath and argue with the waiter who prevents you from signing your own bill because writing is a prohibited work during the Shabbath rest.

If you think that it is ridiculous to believe that we live “in the last days” even though history may still continue for thousands of years, then talk to a religious Jew in Jerusalem for whom the destruction of the Temple means the end of his world.

If you think that God has rescinded his Covenant and abandoned his people, go to the Western (Wailing) Wall of the destroyed Temple, pray with the thousands of chanting, wailing and rhythmically bobbing pious Jews who know that the “shekinah,” the sacred presence of God, still overshadows the Wall in order to protect and comfort his people.

If you think that nothing of the above applies to you, then ask yourself, Is the word “Jesus” synonymous with “God” for you? If so, go to Galilee and Jerusalem.

Some of the above questions did in fact apply to me, so this summer I went back to the Holy Land for the second time. I could walk on the Herodian streets of Jerusalem for only the few yards where excavations had freed the streets of Jesus’ time from two thousand years of accumulated soil and dirt. Still, I was able to cross the Kidron valley several times between the Mount of Olives and the (probable) place of the Last Supper (Jn 18:1).

I walked in the same places and among the same kind of people as Yeshuah of Nazareth once walked. I saw the places where he once spoke and healed, suffered, died and rose from the tomb. A sharp awareness of his human reality overwhelmed me: he was really there and he was a real man; he is not the product of religious imagination and myth-making.

As I was saying Mass near Kapernaum at the shore of the “Sea” of Galilee (a hardly larger body of water than Lake Texoma), I realized how small and limited his “theater of activity” was — a medium-sized lake, a few towns and villages, all within a two-to-three-day walk. And he did not even want his disciples to go beyond these boundaries during his lifetime: “Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:6) — the most effective way to remain insignificant and ineffective.

I celebrated Mass on the Mount of Olives, facing the Temple

Mount where in fact not one stone has been left upon another stone (Mt 23:37) because “you (Jerusalem) did not recognize the time of your visitation.” How many times have I also resisted Jesus’ visitations in my life? When will I finally listen to what he tells me: “If this day you only knew what makes for peace” (Lk 19:42-44)?

At our celebration of the Eucharist in the Empty Tomb Chamber (it is highly probable that this was indeed the burial place of Jesus!), the words of the angel reverberated clear and loud in the small cave as if addressing the whole world: “Do not be distressed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him” (Mk 16:6)!

This is, in fact, the place where all sin and all evil has been vanquished. Here the inexorable law of human death and decay was broken and the tortured body of the Son of God was transformed into the first-born of a new humanity, the beginning of a new universe in which God’s life and love shines in all who belong to his Son.

As I am leaving the tomb, the words of Rilke, the great German poet, keep echoing in my mind with a serene monotony that brooks no contradiction: “Du musst dein Leben ändern: You must change your life.”

So, in my prayers I should no longer exaggerate and speak to Jesus half-heartedly as if he were a mere phantom of my imagination. When I pray, I am talking to a real person who wants to hear my real promises, wants to see my real sorrow, and wants to be loved wholeheartedly.

He takes every word of mine more seriously than I can ever do. He has a plan for me, a limited small mission to fulfill, but that plan I must fulfill with all

my energy, because his plan for me and the universe is the only reality that counts.

He is still a real human being, a Galilean Jew of the first century, but His humanity now radiates the Son’s all embracing love to every individual human being, and I can carry Him in my own hands to two old Cistercians in the nursing home.

I don’t need to go back to Jerusalem for the third time.

*email: fr-roch@cistercian.org*

**In my prayers,  
I should no longer  
exaggerate and speak to  
Jesus half-heartedly as if  
he were a mere phantom  
of my imagination.  
When I pray, I am talking  
to a real person.**

**SUNDAY SUNDAY SUNDAY**

**March 5, 2006**

Mass in the Abbey Church at 11 am followed by the Book Fair from 1-4 pm in the school gymnasium.

Members of Fr. Roch’s five Forms (Classes of 1973, 1978, 1985, 1993, and 2001) are invited to gather at Book Fair this year for a special form master celebration.

Lunch will be catered by Outback Steakhouse.

*The 41st annual*  
**CISTERCIAN BOOKFAIR**

# What football teaches you about the ultimate game

In this column I am supposed to write something that relates to the 2005 Hawks' perfect season.

She-who-must-be-obeyed, aka, my lovely wife Laura, is really ready for me to be finished with this column.



**Afterthoughts**  
*Smokey Briggs '84*

You see, she was not fortunate enough to know me during my playing days at CPS, so she did not witness my many feats of football prowess.

Of course, I did not know ANY girls in those days, except for the ones who played on Greenhill's offensive line.

So, for the past week, I have been looking through old issues of *Exodus* and reminiscing mightily – and when SWMBO gets fed up she starts humming “Glory Days” in a sarcastic manner and tells me to go write or do something useful – anything other than tell her about the time...

So, if I cannot tell her, you guys will just have to do.

It was the fall of 1983 (my senior year coincidentally). The class of '84 had paid its dues and we were ready. We were a strong team. There were 12 seniors on the team, all returning lettermen. My knee was close to 100 percent.

I was excited by the opening of two-a-days as I sucked in the fetid, 111-degree Trinity River air and swatted at the skeeters.

This was the year of the Hawk – or so I thought.

This was the year the underdogs became top dogs. Back then, the Hawks were nearly always the underdogs.

Now, in the Marines, not long after you arrive at boot camp, some dude who has been there about a week longer than you will let you know real quick that it was tougher in the “Old Corps.”

So, sorry guys, but it was tougher back in the 80s. Personally I think Coach Haaser was just a sadist and thought packing our schedule with semi-pro teams was just good fun.

I also hear that Fr. Matthew no longer draws blood with that meter stick of his and Fr. Gregory gives an occasional A.

Like I said, it was tougher in the old days.

Dallas Christian, Trinity Christian, First Baptist, Tyler Gorman, and Ft. Worth Christian were the big boys on our schedule. Looking back, they were probably out of our league. But in the early 80s we always played them close and sometimes we got lucky. In 1983 I

planned on beating them all – by sheer will if nothing else.

We opened with Dallas Christian. It turned out to be the second most disappointing game of my life.

They were big, fast, and numerous.

I was playing nose guard. The center looked like a senior member of the Hitler Youth – 6'4", 245 lbs., blond headed and blue eyed. He looked like he had been shaving for 10 or 12 years.

I swear that in the second quarter they brought out his fresh clone in a clean jersey and did it again in the 3rd and again in the 4th.

It was one of those days when life proves to you that the good guys do not always win. We played our hearts out and got beat 34-7.

And, I got on the bus saddened but proud of my Hawks, because on the last play leather was popping like it did on the first. We lost, but we were not defeated.

We walloped Trinity Valley in the next game and lined up against Trinity Christian Academy at Hawk Field for the third.

Now, I really, really, really wanted to beat Trinity Christian. There was bad blood between us from seasons past. I have never entered a game more determined to win or die trying.

At halftime we went to the field house tied 0-0. Time after time the offense had just missed on what was a good drive and time after time the defense had held on by the skin of its teeth.

But we were tied with what was supposed to be the best team in the conference.

We came out looking to win.

Life is mean. The lesson was simple. Eventually, if they have more guys than you, who are bigger and faster, they can usually wear you down.

Trinity scored three quick hits in the third quarter – all were long plays that busted loose past dog-tired defenders, many of whom were playing both ways. In the end it was 27-7 and we were 1-2 on the season. That was the most disappointing game of my life.

We played some good games that year. It's funny; I remember the losses better than the wins.

I will never forget First Baptist. I played the best game of my life. For a slow, less-than-talented guy, I was on fire. There was this one play....

We held the best offense in the league to 62 yards – and got beat 9-7.

We finished 6-4 on the season and closed out with a win over Greenhill that made it all okay.

*Continued on page 22*

## calendar

### December

17 Alumni Christmas  
Open House

19-30 Christmas Break

### January

4 Alumni College Day  
28 Admissions testing

### February

4 Admissions testing  
16-18 BraveART  
24 Moroney Award Dinner

### March

5 Book Fair  
13-17 Spring Break

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